

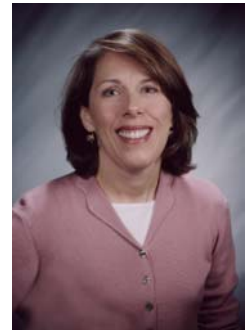
This month's newsletter provides practical tips on the most pressing leadership responsibility: hiring the right people for your organization. Poor hiring decisions drain precious resources and impair your organization's ability to achieve goals. Conversely, hiring the right people positions your organization's performance level to soar – a result expected of successful leaders. An initial step to hiring the right people is to understand and leverage the value your organization provides its employees as a way to attract prospective new hires.

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## 4 EASY STEPS FOR ASPIRING TALENT MAGNETS

By Carol Bergeron

“Talent magnets” are leaders who seem to effortlessly attract the best people time after time. They earn their stripes for good reason, namely impressive employee hiring decisions. They think broadly and listen carefully for the tangibles and intangibles of the employment experience expressly favored by employees. They recognize that these factors influence peoples' decisions to join and stay with a firm. As leaders they understand their direct impact on the employment experience and choose to continuously improve it because it is fundamental to organizational success. The following steps will help you get started. The process is not all that dissimilar to understanding why customers choose to do business with you rather than the competition.



### Ask questions

Knowing the reasons why employees choose to join and stay with your firm is the first step to becoming a “talent magnet”. Start with these:

- Why do employees choose to join your organization?
- Why do employees choose to stay with your organization?
- What do employees get from their work experience that allows them to be and feel successful?
- What do employees get from their work experience that allows them to thrive and grow?
- What experiences have resulted in employees who are committed?
- What culture and environment is provided that is conducive to getting good work done?

The primary goal in asking these questions is to identify what your organization already has going for it from the employee's perspective. The next goal is to recognize value that employees want from their employment experience but currently do not get.

### Collect data

There are plenty of ways to get the answers to these questions all of which start with asking your current employees. Solicit feedback from terminated employees too. Use the approaches that make the most sense for your organization such as: surveys, one-on-one casual conversations and focus groups.

The data collected will not all point to compensation and benefits as the most compelling reason employees choose to join and stay. Examples of what to listen for may include: one-on-one coaching time with manager, a inclusive leadership style, opportunity to influence direction and related work processes, stretch assignments to promote job enrichment, recognition for achievements, working with others who also have a strong work ethic, an environment tolerant of risk taking, flexibility granted to accommodate child or elder care demands, opportunity to do good work in the community. This list is not all inclusive but you get the idea.

### **Analyze your findings**

Data collection will lead to many discoveries. While you will benefit from confirming what you thought to be true, expect some surprises.

Look for trends common to your whole workforce and those common to specific employee segments. For instance, part-time employees may value flexible work schedules. While those nearing retirement may place greater value on the respect with which they are treated as they transfer their knowledge to others.

Distinguish between group and individual preferences. You may discover preferences that are specific to individuals such as: office layout or proximity, access to the best tools of the trade, interaction with senior management and networking opportunities with industry experts.

If you are still unclear on what the answers really mean then probe further through subsequent conversations.

### **Determine and implement next steps**

At the onset of data gathering, you set out to identify tangible and intangible employee preferences that do and do not exist. Build on what is already working for you. Of those missing, determine and prioritize the ones it makes the most sense to work on. Can you do something about them? If so, what? What is getting in the way? What are you going to do? Pick the low hanging fruit first or those items that you can change with some ease.

In summary, recruiting top talent is a challenge for any organization, a challenge that will compound itself as the economy continues to rebound. Strategies used by “talent magnets” start by understanding the value their organization offers and lacks, as perceived by employees, and leveraging that knowledge to strengthen the ability to hire and retain the right people.

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